

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Kennedy, Maev. "London basks in reflection of Kapoor's Sky Mirror." *The Guardian*. P. 20. 2010.

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Eyewitness 27.09.10 Kensington Gardens, London

London basks in reflection of Kapoor's Sky Mirror

Maev Kennedy

As a blood red sun appeared to rise over the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens while a huge silver moon set over the Long Water lake, it was clear the challenge for the round-the-clock security guards would be to keep swans, dogs and children off the artwork, rather than any vandals or robbers who might be interested to learn that several million pounds worth of contemporary art has landed in the heart of London.

Anish Kapoor was almost as bewitched as the swans, even under the most Monday mornings of grey skies.

"The best site in London for a piece of art," he said, looking across the water at the great grey stainless steel disc of his Sky Mirror. "Probably in the world."

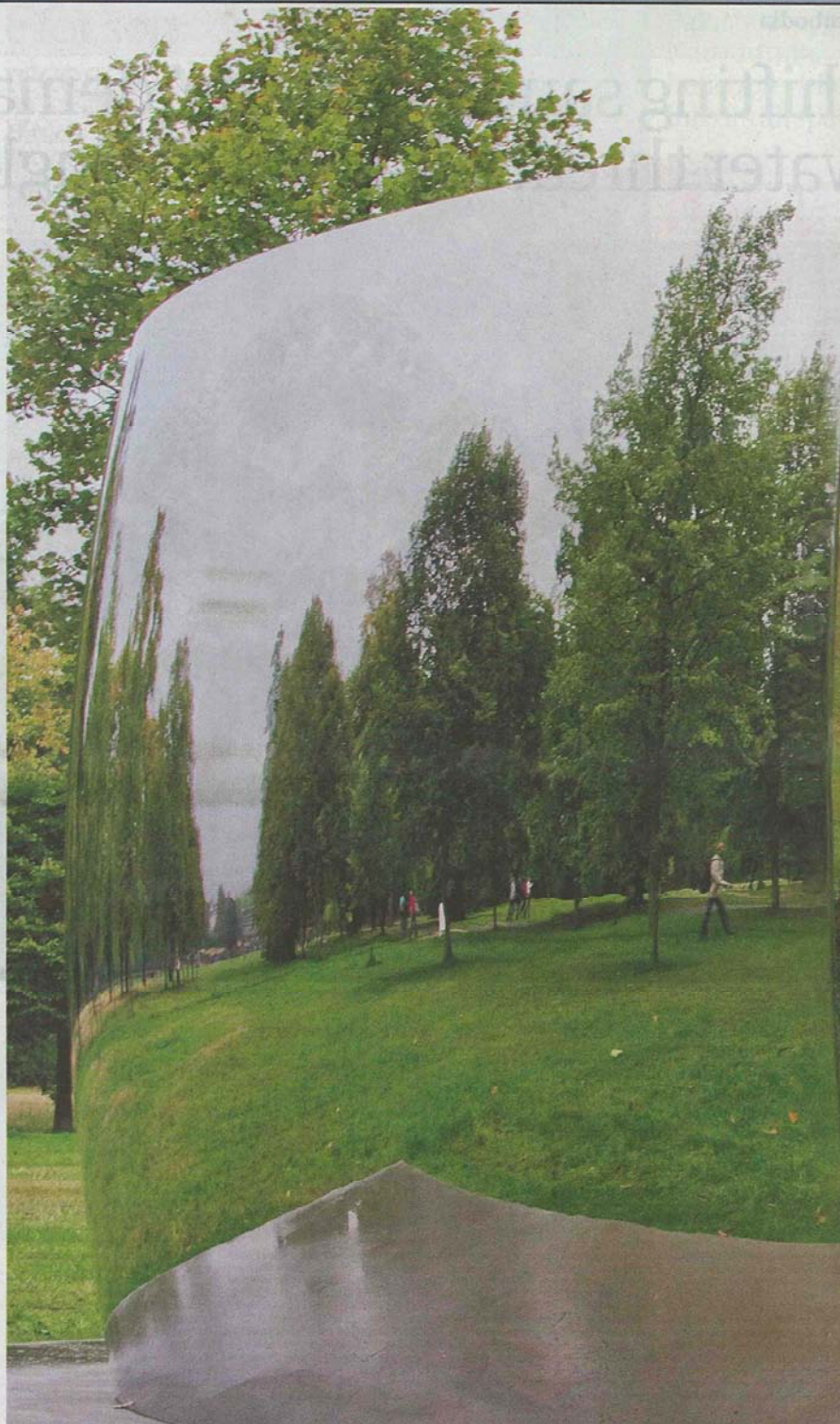
While Kapoor's giant pieces have been exhibited in the open air across the world and in many places in Britain, the last that London saw of the Turner prize-winning sculptor was when he wreaked havoc at the Royal Academy, installing an engine forcing a giant block of crimson wax through narrow doorways, and a cannon which fired more blocks through another door until the room beyond looked like a particularly messy abattoir.

London has never before seen an outdoor installation of his art, but the artist spent many hours roaming Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park deciding what he would place where, years before the Royal Parks and the Serpentine Gallery got together to create this exhibition of four large polished stainless steel pieces which will remain in the park for six months. The site he chose for Sky Mirror - last seen outside the Rockefeller Center in Manhattan - was previously selected as the perfect spot for sculpture by Henry Moore. The Kapoor now stands on a site levelled for a giant archway given to the park by Moore, which was removed temporarily for conservation work some 20 years ago.

Hans Ulrich Obrist, curator of the installation and co-director of the Serpentine, a man whose pallor speaks of long days and nights in windowless art boxes rather than strolls in the open air, described the project as "a dream come true".

When he first came to the gallery as a guest curator 15 years ago, he said they must immediately get some art outside the walls and the railings, into the surrounding acres of lakes, lawns and trees. It has taken until now to achieve it. The swans were already admiring themselves in the mirror when he arrived in darkness at 6am, and he was entranced at the difference they made, along with the curious dogs and the toddler looking at himself between his legs trying to make his upended reflection turn right side up again.

"Art for the dogs and for the swans!" he cried. "Art for all."



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